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FM AMEMBASSY TOKYO
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6672
INFO RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY
RHEHAAA/THE WHITE HOUSE WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RUEAWJA/USDOJ WASHDC PRIORITY
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RUAYJAA/CTF 72
RUEHNH/AMCONSUL NAHA 1815
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RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL 0947
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 1287

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 07 TOKYO 002277

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR E, P, EB, EAP/J, EAP/P, EAP/PD, PA;
WHITE HOUSE/NSC/NEC; JUSTICE FOR STU CHEMTOB IN ANTI-TRUST DIVISION;
TREASURY/OASIA/IMI/JAPAN; DEPT PASS USTR/PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE;
SECDEF FOR JCS-J-5/JAPAN,
DASD/ISA/EAPR/JAPAN; DEPT PASS ELECTRONICALLY TO USDA
FAS/ITP FOR SCHROETER; PACOM HONOLULU FOR PUBLIC DIPLOMACY ADVISOR;
CINCPAC FLT/PA/ COMNAVFORJAPAN/PA.

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [OIIP](#) [KMDR](#) [KPAO](#) [PGOV](#) [PINR](#) [ECON](#) [ELAB](#) [JA](#)

SUBJECT: JAPANESE MORNING PRESS HIGHLIGHTS 08/19/08

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- (2) Prosecuting activists for obstructive acts at whaling research vessels a matter of course, but questions remain

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- (1) International community should extend cooperation for stability in post-Musharraf Pakistan
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- (1) Don't allow vacuum following Pakistan president's resignation
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- (1) Treating violent attacks against whaling vessels as criminal matters the best approach
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- (1) Increase in CO2 emissions: Change in energy policy needed

3) Prime Minister's Official Residence (Kantei)

Prime Minister's schedule, August 18

NIKKEI (Page 2) (Full)
August 19, 2008

09:56

Met Deputy Chief Cabinet Secretary Futahashi at the Kantei.

10:24

Met Chief Cabinet Secretary Machimura, followed by Lower House member Akiko Yamanaka.

14:24

Met new Ambassador to Thailand Komachi and other newly-appointed ambassadors, followed by Vice Foreign Minister Yabunaka.

15:54

Met Foreign Ministry Asian and Oceanian Affairs Bureau Director-General Saiki.

16:55

Attended the inaugural ceremony for the Japan-China-ROK Children's Storybooks Exchange 2008, held at the National Institution for Youth Education in Yoyogi.

17:50

Met Futahashi at the Kantei.

18:59

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Met former MEXT Minister Nakayama and his wife, Abduction Issue Minister Nakayama at his official residence.

4) Government to carefully watch developments in Pakistan following Musharraf's resignation

YOMIURI (Page 2) (Full)
August 19, 2008

The government intends to carefully watch how things will develop in Pakistan following President Pervez Musharraf's announcement of his resignation on Aug. 18. Speaking before reporters at his official residence last night, Prime Minister Fukuda said: "I do not think there will be some changes in the war on terror and the situation in Afghanistan for the time being, but the situation afterward is unpredictable."

Pakistan is the only Islamic state that possesses nuclear weapons, so the government is strongly concerned about an outflow and proliferation of nuclear technology, etc., to terrorist groups under the confused situation. A government source said last night: "I am concerned that the political situation would become unstable, from the viewpoint of the war on terror and nuclear nonproliferation. We must carefully watch the situation." A senior Foreign Ministry official also indicated the ministry's willingness to extend necessary assistance to Pakistan to stabilize that country, remarking: "We hope that the change of government will be carried out without hitch and the situation will be quickly stabilized."

5) Prime Minister Fukuda predicts no change in war on terror for time being

NIKKEI (Page 3) (Full)
August 19, 2008

Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda, regarding Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf's decision to resign, commented yesterday: "I don't think there will be any immediate change in the war on terror or the situation in Afghanistan." In response to questions from reporters at his official residence, the prime minister also said: "A variety of events could unfold. But I am not in a position to predict what might happen."

6) Prime minister eager to continue refueling operation

ASAHI (Page 4) (Excerpts)
August 19, 2008

Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda is expected to announce his view on the much-talked-about next extraordinary Diet session in today's government and ruling coalition liaison meeting. The prime minister yesterday reiterated the need to extend the refueling support special measures law. Explicitly telling reporters that the government would "enact necessary legislation" along with economic measures and a consumer agency bill, the prime minister reiterated his view that the next session should be convened at an early date.

The prime minister also expressed eagerness for extending law that provides the basis for the country's refueling mission in the Indian Ocean during the next extra session, saying: "How to associate with the international community is an extremely important matter. Japan is not completely unconnected with this issue." (The question of

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extending the refueling operation) must be determined comprehensively." Touching on the possible impact of Pakistani President Musharraf's decision to resign, the prime minister said: "How this might affect the war on terror and the situation in Afghanistan remains to be seen. I don't think it will result in any change for the time being."

7) DPJ leaders agree to oppose extension of Antiterrorism Special Measures Law

ASAHI (Page 4) (Full)
August 19, 2008

Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) President Ichiro Ozawa dined last night with Lower House Vice Speaker Takahiro Yokomichi; Azuma Koshiishi, chairman of the DPJ caucus in the Upper House; and Yoshio Hachiro, foreign minister of the shadow cabinet. The four DPJ leaders agreed that their party will oppose an extension of the new Antiterrorism Special Measures Law, under which the Maritime Self-Defense Force is currently tasked with refueling activities in the Indian Ocean. Yokomichi, Koshiishi and Hachiro, who were members of the former Japan Socialist Party, have clarified that they will support Ozawa in the party's presidential election.

8) Fukuda makes no mention of overriding vote on MSDF bill

YOMIURI (Page 4) (Full)
August 19, 2008

Prime Minister Fukuda yesterday evening avoided referring to whether his ruling coalition of the Liberal Democratic Party and the New Komeito will take an overriding second vote in the House of Representatives on a government-planned bill amending the new Antiterrorism Special Measures Law for the Maritime Self-Defense Force's continued refueling activities in the Indian Ocean if the bill is voted down in the opposition-controlled House of Councillors. "There's no need to say that now," Fukuda told reporters. He added: "I have been saying we should continue Japan's refueling activities in the Indian Ocean. I should take it into consideration and make a judgment on this matter." He was replying to a question from reporters at his office.

9) MPD seeks arrest warrants for three U.S. environmental group members for obstructing a research whaling ship's activities

ASAHI (Top play) (Excerpts)
Evening, August 18, 2008

The Metropolitan Police Department Public Security Bureau sought earlier today arrest warrants for three members -- two Americans and one Briton -- of the Sea Shepherd Conservation Society (SS), a U.S. environmental group, on suspicion of obstructing a Japanese research whaling ship's activities in the Southern Ocean. In a series of obstructive activities, the three are suspected of having thrown smoke candles in February last year onto the Kaiko Maru, the leading ship of the Japanese whaling fleet by the Institute of Cetacean Research. The Public Security Bureau has decided to establish a case against them, concluding that their acts were "systematic and highly dangerous and malicious."

The arrest warrants were sought for two Americans aged 30 and 41 and a 28-year-old Briton. After obtaining the arrest warrants, the

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bureau intends to ask the International Criminal Police Organization (ICPO) to put them on its international wanted list through the

National Police Agency. Once their whereabouts are confirmed, the bureau also plans to seek their custody under a treaty on extradition or via diplomatic channels. Difficulties are expected before the handover of their custody.

The 41-year-old American is suspected to have thrown 18 smoke candles onto the Kaiko Maru's deck from an SS vessel on February 12, 2007, causing several of them to release fumes. The 30-year-old American and the 28-year-old Briton are suspected to have transferred themselves to a dinghy and threw a rope into the sea, which coiled around the Kaiko Maru's propeller.

Chief Cabinet Secretary Nobutaka Machimura, in a press conference earlier today made the following comment regarding the fact that the MPD has sought arrest warrants for the members of the environmental group: "It is only natural to seek arrest warrants after concluding there was a crime. No matter what sort of argument one holds, a situation where physical interference causes injuries or threatens the lives of those involved should not be forgiven."

10) MPD obtains arrest warrants for three Sea Shepherd members; Plans to put them on Interpol list shortly

ASAHI (Page 35) (Excerpts)
August 19, 2008

The Metropolitan Police Department Public Security Bureau obtained yesterday arrest warrants for three members of the Sea Shepherd Conservation Society (SS), an U.S. environmental group, for throwing smoke candles and other objects onto the Kaiko Maru, the lead ship of the Japanese whaling fleet by the Institute of Cetacean Institute, which was conducting research whaling in the Southern Ocean in February 2007.

The MPD has obtained arrest warrants for Jonathan Batchelor, 30, and Ralph Koo, 41, who are both U.S. nationals, and Daniel Bebawi, a 28-year-old Briton. The MPD plans to ask before long the International Criminal Police Organization (ICPO) to put them on its international wanted list.

11) Prime Minister Fukuda: Visit to Pyongyang by abduction minister possible

YOMIURI (Page 4) (Full)
August 19, 2008

Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda met last night at his official residence with State Minister for Abduction Issue Kyoko Nakayama and her husband, former Education Minister Nariaki Nakayama. In the meeting, Fukuda indicated the possibility of sending the abduction minister to Pyongyang in order to seek progress on the issue of North Korea's abductions of Japanese nationals. He told them: "If it comes to the crunch, I may send Abduction Minister Nakayama to Pyongyang." The meeting lasted for about three hours over dinner.

12) Fukuda eyes mid-September as opening day of Diet session

NIKKEI (Page 2) (Excerpts)
August 19, 2008

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Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda decided yesterday to set the opening day of the next extraordinary Diet session at sometime in mid-September. Fukuda plans to hold the session earlier than in usual years out of a desire to enact such key bills as one amending the New Antiterrorism Special Measures Law to extend the Maritime Self-Defense Force's (MSDF) refueling mission in the Indian Ocean. The decision also stems from his consideration for New Komeito, which has insisted on sometime in late September. The junior ruling partner is still cautious about taking a revote in the House of Representatives to pass the bill. Attention is being focused on how New Komeito will respond.

Fukuda had been calling for opening the session sometime between late August and early September, based on the stance of giving

priority to enacting legislation to enable the MSDF to continue the refueling mission, while the New Komeito was opposed to premising the schedule on a revote. The convocation in mid-September is a compromise proposal, in a sense. The most likely possibility is that the session will be opened on September 12 and last for about two months.

13) Amari: If Fukuda cabinet's approval rate drops below 20 PERCENT , Aso will become next prime minister

ASAHI (Page 4) (Full)
August 19, 2008

Appearing on a satellite television program yesterday, Akira Amari, former minister of economy, trade and industry, who is regarded as an aide to Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) Secretary General Taro Aso, indicated that if the Fukuda cabinet's slump in the polls continues, Aso will become the next prime minister before the next House of Representatives election. Amari stated:

"If the (Fukuda cabinet's) support rate drops to below 20 PERCENT , some in the LDP would call for a change of the cabinet. I believe Secretary General Aso is the person who will be chosen (as the successor to Fukuda) when that occurs."

14) Defense minister to visit Okinawa today

NIKKEI (Page 2) (Full)
August 19, 2008

Defense Minister Yoshimasa Hayashi will make his first official visit to Okinawa Prefecture on Aug. 19-20. Hayashi will meet with Okinawa Gov. Hirokazu Nakaima today and with Nago City's Mayor Yoshikazu Shimabukuro and other municipal heads tomorrow to talk about the pending issue of relocating the U.S. military's Futenma airfield in the city of Ginowan (to a coastal area of Camp Schwab, a U.S. military base in the island prefecture's northern coastal city of Nago). Meanwhile, the government has been facing difficulties in its coordination with local officials over Futenma relocation. Hayashi intends to show a stance of attaching importance to talks for a solution to the issue.

15) Yokosuka civic group launches activities to oppose deployment of U.S. nuclear carrier

AKAHATA (Page 15) (Excerpts)
August 19, 2008

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People who are opposed to the deployment of a nuclear-powered aircraft carrier at the U.S. Yokosuka Naval Base in Yokosuka City, Kanagawa Prefecture, held a press conference at the Yokosuka municipal government office yesterday and revealed their plan for future activities.

The group, set up on July 6, insists, "We don't need a nuclear-powered aircraft carrier." It has launched activities against the planned deployment of a nuclear carrier in cooperation with many citizens. The group plans a demonstration on the streets once a month and several small-scale gatherings every week.

16) Foreign Ministry to strengthen Africa diplomacy

MAINICHI (Page 5) (Slightly abridged)
August 19, 2008

Africa is becoming an area to which Japan is giving increased diplomatic priority. The government sent in July and August a fact-finding team (to Sudan to prepare for a planned dispatch of its Self-Defense Forces (SDF) personnel) to United Nations peacekeeping operations (PKO). The Foreign Ministry appointed promising young diplomats as ambassadors to three African countries, including Ghana.

The government announced at the Fourth Tokyo International

Conference on African Development in May in Yokohama that it would double its official development assistance (ODA) to Africa. In addition to the establishment of embassies in three African countries in 2007, Japan plans to set up in fiscal 2008 embassies in two countries, including Mauritania.

Such issues as SDF participation in PKOs, global warming, and energy shortages are connected in Africa. The Foreign Ministry, therefore, wants to strengthen Japan's foreign policy toward Africa using the energy of young diplomats.

SCHIEFFER